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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 192971

SIPDIS

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PLEASE PASS TO IRPO DUBAI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST - IRAN'S FLAWED ELECTIONS

REF: RPO DUBAI 011

Classified By: NEA: James Jeffrey, PDAS

11. (U) This is an action request; see paragraph 3.

12. (C) Iran will hold elections on December 15 for three institutions: the Assembly of Experts, local municipal councils, and a handful of Majles by-elections. Vetting procedures ensure that these institutions remain biased from the outset toward individuals committed to Iran's Supreme Leader (reftel).

13. (C) Action request: The Department requests addressee posts deliver the points in paragraph 4 to senior host country officials. Our objective is to coordinate public statements about Iran's flawed elections process prior to Iran's December 15 Election Day and to enhance our knowledge of election activities on the ground.

14. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF TALKING POINTS:

-- The Iranian people deserve transparent and participatory elections. This standard includes the freedom to choose candidates from the spectrum of Iranian political views. It means unrestricted access to a free media, freedom of political association and assembly, freedom from intimidation on election day, and non-interference from the military and militia groups in the elections.

-- Iranians should know that the international community supports their aspirations for a genuinely democratic system. We hope that in your public and private messages, you will highlight the profound flaws in the current system and press the Iranian government to respect international standards for

transparent and participatory elections.

-- The United States will be watching these elections closely, and we intend to respond to anticipated developments during the campaign, such as the outcome of the vetting process, as well as the election results themselves. Our public statements will address the following areas of concern:

-- The Iranian people deserve to have candidates on the ballot who have a sound plan to fix the dire economy, reduce unemployment, and improve the overall quality of life for the Iranian people. If the Iranian government were truly committed to democracy, its citizens would be able to vote for and against candidates of their choosing. Instead, the unelected few that comprise the Council of Guardians has made that decision for the citizens of Iran.

-- Although Iran's Assembly of Experts is elected, it is unrepresentative in composition and accessibility. The Guardian Council has restricted membership in the Assembly of Experts to only those it deems to have met the definition of senior cleric, thus disqualifying two-thirds of the prospective candidates and making the entity undemocratic in its nature. The Guardian Council ignored recent Iranian calls to open up eligibility for the Assembly to women and non-clerics, moves that would have made the body more representative of the Iranian population.

-- Moreover, the circular nature of the Iranian system is

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fundamentally undemocratic: The Assembly chooses the Supreme Leader, who chooses half of the members of the Guardian Council, which in turn vets the candidates for the Assembly.

-- We are confident that the Iranian people would make a positive choice for their future IF they had a free choice. Instead, their choice of candidates has been artificially restricted. The Iranian people deserve better.

-- We would appreciate any reporting that your diplomatic missions in Iran would be able to share with us regarding illegitimate election activities, including ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, or harassment.

END TEXT OF TALKING POINTS.

15. (U) Washington appreciates posts' assistance. Please caption replies SIPDIS and use the IR country tag.
RICE